Summary of the
Quality Systems Committee Teleconference
December 7, 1998

The Quality Systems (QS) Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on December 7, 1998, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. Joe Slayton of EPA Region III. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. A proposed agenda for the interim NELAC is given in Attachment C. A list of parking lot issues is given in Attachment D. A copy of the letter that will be sent to commenters to acknowledge receipt of their comments is presented in Attachment E. The table template for commenters to use when submitting comments is also presented in Attachment E. The QS Committee criteria for developing standards is presented in Attachment F. *The purpose of the meeting was to: review action items from the previous meeting, discuss the agenda for the NELAC interim meeting, and address parking lot issues.*

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

All action items from the November 12, 1998 teleconference have been addressed.

Action items from Annapolis meeting on November 8, 9, and 19, 1998:

- Item 1, editorial changes were made to the letter that will be sent to commenters to acknowledgment receipt of their comments. This letter is presented in Attachment E.
- Item 2, full citations for the references for section 5.9.4 still need to be provided.
- Item 3, replacing the abbreviation *MDL* with appropriate language and eliminating references to *3.18 x MDL* as a quantitation limit still needs to be done.
- Item 7, language for Section 5.10.2.1 needs to be drafted.
- Item 8, the definition of *Calibration Standard* will be changed as per the *Glossary of Quality Assurance Terms and Acronyms*, December 5, 1995. The introductory paragraph to Appendix B was also modified. In addition, reviewing Appendix B, Definitions for Quality Systems, is one of the agenda items for the interim conference.
- Item 10, the issue of initial demonstration of capability(IDOC) regarding all media etc., and how universal does this requirement need to be will be addressed at the interim conference.

PROPOSED AGENDA FOR INTERIM NELAC

Mr. Slayton summarized the proposed agenda for the QS Committee. The QS Committee is scheduled to meet on January 11 and 12, 1998. The proposed agenda is presented in Attachment C.

DISCUSSION OF PARKING LOT ITEMS

The following discussion pertained to the list of parking lot issues and items as of the November 12, 1998 QS Committee teleconference. Consequently, the numerical sequence of items corresponds to the parking lot list in the meeting summary from November 12th. The list of parking lot items and issues in Attachment D of this summary reflect those items addressed and removed from the list.

Item 1: Ms. Labie forwarded the listed items to the NELAP Board for them to determine which issues to address.

Item 2: The air monitoring appendix will be addressed during the next teleconference.

Item 3: The issue of determining when standards are more stringent will be addressed as part of discussion pertaining to Section 5.1 at the interim conference.

Item 4: Mr. Slayton is addressing this as an action item (see Action Item 7 in Attachment A).

Item 5: Draft language has been included in the microbiology requirements regarding testing of glassware washing technique and media for laboratories that only use media and soap which comes with manufacturer's certifications. This language will be reviewed at the interim conference.

Item 6: Providing a consolidated list of records is an agenda item for the next teleconference. The QS Committee may also consider a similar table for standard operating procedures.

Item 7: The issue of continuous monitors may be closely tied with the Field Measurements and Sampling Committee. Consequently, this topic may need to be addressed in concert with that committee. The QS Committee will work on this issue between the interim and next full conference.

Item 8: Action Items from the NELAC IV Conference have been assigned to and addressed by QS Committee participants; however, the QS Committee still needs to discuss the responses.

Item 9: The IDOC issue is on the agenda for the next teleconference.

Item10: Alternative definitions for *Method Blank* and *Calibration Standard* have been provided. Reviewing all the definitions in Appendix B is an agenda item for the interim conference.

Item 11: Review of the glossary has been combined with item 10.

Item 12: The issue of dividing the definition of media into a number of matrices still needs to be addressed.

Attachment A

ACTION ITEMS
Quality Systems Committee
December 7, 1998

Item No.	Action Item	Date to be Completed
1.	QS Committee teleconference.	January 5, 1999 10 to 12 EST
2.	Mr. Slayton to prepare an agenda for the January 5th teleconference. Potential discussion topics include the Air Testing appendix, the table of documentation citations and SOPs, IDOCs, and homework items from the NELAC IV.	Prior to January 5th teleconference.
3.	RTI to prepare draft minutes of the teleconference.	December 8, 1998
4.	Delete the citations of *(Quality Systems)* found in Appendix B, revise the introductory paragraph, replace definition of *Calibration Standard*	Prior to January 5 teleconference.
5.	Send Mr. Kenneth Jackson a copy of the responses to the comments from the VA NELAC Workgroup.	
6.	Mr. Glowacki to provide a consolidated air document.	Prior to January 5 teleconference.
7.	Mr. Slayton to address the general comments from the Virginia NELAC Workgroup.	Prior to January 5 teleconference.
8.	QS Committee participants to prepare responses to assigned comments from the Virginia NELAC Workgroup. Each participant's responses should be distributed to the other QS Committee participants.	Prior to January 5 teleconference.
9.	Mr. Slayton to provide full citations for the references for section 5.9.4.	
10.	Mr. Porterfield to provide language for Section 5.10.2.	
11.	Mr. Slayton to replace the abbreviation *MDL* with appropriate language and eliminate references to *3.18 x MDL* as a quantitation limit.	Prior to January 5 teleconference.

Attachment B

PARTICIPANTS
Quality Systems Committee
December 7, 1998

Name	Affiliation	Phone Numbers
Mr. Joe Slayton	USEPA, Region III, OASQA	T: 410-573-2653 F: 410-573-2698 E: slayton.joe@epamail.epa.gov
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Mr. David Mendenhall	Utah Department of Health	T: 801-584-8470 F: 801-584-8501 E: dmendenh@doh.state.ut.us
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AGENDA FOR INTERIM NELAC
Quality Systems Committee
December 7, 1998

NELAC Interim Meeting
QS Committee Agenda

January 11, 1999

1:30- 1:50	QS Committee Introductions, Guiding Principles, Areas of Focus, Approach for Receiving and Responding to Comments and Session Ground Rules	
1:50- 4:30	Proposed Changes to Standards (Major Section Re-Writes):	
1:50- 2:50	5.9.4	Calibration
2:50- 3:20	D.1.4	Detection
3:20- 3:35	Break	
3:35- 4:30	D.5	Air Testing

Adjourn

January 12, 1999

9:00- 9:30	D.3 (& 5.9.4.2.2.f)	Microbiology
9:30- 9:45	5.5.3.1	Internal Audits
9:45-10:00	Appendix B	Definitions ("Confirmation", "Initial Demonstration of Capability", "Matrix", "Quantitation Limits", as well as, Proposed Changes from Program Policy and Structure Committee)
10:00-10:15	Break	
10:15-11:00	Appendix B	Discussion Topics Continued
11:00- 11:30	Appendix C	Initial Demonstration of Capability
11:30-12:00	Proposed Changes to Standards (Small Changes within Sections and Comments from VWEA/VA-AWWA): 5.1; 5.4.2.e; 5.5.2; 5.5.3.2; 5.5.4; 5.62; 5.10.4; 5.10.5.c; 5.11.3; 5.12; D.1.1; etc. As Time Allows	

Attachment D

PARKING LOT ITEMS/ISSUES
Quality Systems Committee
December 7, 1998

Parking Lot Items/Issues as of December 7, 1998. Items/issues will remain in the Parking Lot until they are completed.

1. Air Appendix

The Air Analysis Workgroup has a number of editorial changes which were deferred from the November 8-10, 1998 QS Committee meeting because of lack of time. These items will be discussed at that time.

2. On-Going Issues

In 5.1 Scope (section b, 2nd item): "If more stringent standards or requirements are included in a mandated test method or by regulation, the laboratory shall demonstrate that such requirements are met (See the supplemental accreditation requirements in Section 1.9.2)." What if the standards are not the same and one does not appear to be obviously "more stringent"?
[note: one thought is that perhaps this should not be a major issue given that the two standards are probably of equal merit]

In addition, changes to the standard will be proposed at the January 1999 Interim Meeting, which will no longer specify the MDL (40 CFR Part 136) procedure be employed unless it is mandated by the test method or applicable regulation.

3. MDL

Standard needs to be searched for references to "MDL" and "3.18" (given changes being proposed for Section D.1.4 "Detection Limits"). The committee will need to decide if these are to be changed in the proposed update to the standards.

4. Proposed New Appendix

Appendix for listing of required records (all pulled into one table). Need to reach consensus on the table and the suggested introduction provided by D. Porterfield.

5. Continuous Monitors

Topic was briefly discussed at the Annapolis meeting (11/10/98) and it was decided that this topic may require its own appendix with associated special QC.

6. Action Items from the NELAC IV Conference.

This was a homework item and most of the work is completed but it has not been discussed.

7. **Initial Demonstration of Capability**:

Need to address an IDOC for tests for which you can not spike. Also, does IDOC need to be universal and address all medias?

8. Definitions/Glossary

Changes necessary to be consistent with Program Policy and Structure proposal. QS Committee will review definitions/glossary at interim meeting.

9. Matrix and Media

Suggestion has been made that the media definition should in turn be divided into a number of matrices. The committee has pulled into one file all items related to this issue (part of NELAC IV homework).

Attachment E

COMMENTER ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTER
Quality Systems Committee
December 7, 1998

Date:

Dear :

On behalf of the Quality Systems Committee, thank you for your comments on the Chapter 5 standards of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC). The standards are routinely reviewed and updated. Continual improvement of the standards is the focal point of NELAC process. We encourage your continued written input as well as your attendance at the NELAC interim meeting and yearly conference. Also, our committee routinely schedules 1-2 open forum meetings during each calender year.

Our committee requests that all comments be supplied in electronic format (WordPerfect if possible) and that handwritten, hardcopy and the use of color fonts be avoided. Comments are considered by the QS committee on a first come basis. We have placed a template (table) for comments on the NELAC Web page, which we hope will ensure that the processes is efficient. With this process we hope that emphasis can be placed on consideration of the comments so that the available time is not spent in the mechanics of exchanging information (US Mail and re-typing comments). Routinely, each set of comments is assigned a QS leader who will complete the comment table including suggested language for any proposed changes to the NELAC standards. The Leader will guide a discussion of the comments during routine committee meetings. The minutes of the meeting (posted on the web site) will capture the information in the completed table from committee discussions, thoughts/rationale and present the final decisions.

Again, thank you for taking the time and effort to improve the NELAC Quality System standards.

Sincerely,

Joseph Slayton, Chair
Quality Systems Committee

Comment ID #: , Source of Comments (Name): QS Lead on Response (Name):			
Standard Rev. # SECTION# and QS Standard Narrative (To Filled In by Commentor)	**COMMENT to QS (To Be Filled In by Commentor)**	**QS Leader Provided Proposed Change (Commentor Leave Blank)**	**RATIONAL (from QS Leader) (Commentor Leave Blank)**

Attachment F

REVIEW CRITERIA
Quality Systems Committee
December 7, 1998

The QS Committee established a set of criteria by which to evaluate the requirements specified in Chapter 5. The standards in Chapter 5 should meet the criteria listed below:

Flexible: Allow laboratories freedom to use their experience and expertise in performing their work and allow for new and novel analytical methods and approaches, (e.g., Performance Based Measurement System [PBMS]). That the standards specify the "What" and avoid were possible the "How To", (e.g., control limits must be developed to determine if a QC check result is acceptable, the standards do not specify how the laboratory is to determine these limits).

Auditable: Sufficient detail is included so that the accrediting authorities evaluate laboratories consistently and uniformly.

Practical/Essential: The standards represent essential QA policies and QC procedures and that these standards should not place an unreasonable burden upon the laboratories.

Widely Applicable: International scope- consistent with ISO Guide 25. Environmental laboratories- the QA policies, which establish essential QC procedures, are applicable to environmental laboratories regardless of size and complexity.